

Legal Aid helped me straighten out a problem I was having with my unemployment benefits. In 2009, I was laid off from my job as a welder. Between my part-time job on the weekends, and partial unemployment benefits, I was able to get by for a while.

Unfortunately, my depression got really bad and I had to be admitted to the Veterans' Administration (VA) Hospital. I lost the part-time job because my boss couldn't hold the job for me until I got out of the hospital. By the time the VA discharged me, I had no job and no longer had a permanent place to live. My unemployment benefits were cut off until the Labor Department could schedule a fact-finding hearing to decide whether I was still eligible. My legal aid attorney, Susan, went to the hearing with me. She also worked with my doctor to get paperwork showing that I am now well enough to work. After the hearing, I was approved for benefits.

I thought I was all set but then at Christmas, when I went to file my weekly unemployment claim, I got a recording saying that my benefits were being held again. It turns out that there was some mistake, and I didn't get a check for the week ending December 25 or January 1. Susan questioned why my benefits had stopped and the mistake was fixed. I got the two missing checks and started getting unemployment again.

Things are better now because I have now found a job and I am glad to be back at work. But if it hadn't been for legal aid, I would not have been able to get my unemployment case straightened out so that I could get back on my feet.

Ernest Hudson
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